



*the  
Golden  
Candlestick*

**THE BUILDING OF THE  
NEW JERUSALEM**

**Part 1**

**T. Austin-Sparks**

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*Volume 176*

## TRUTH IN THE INWARD PARTS

*Reading: Rev. 21:2-3,9-12,19,21,27; 22:1.  
“Thou desirest truth in the inward parts” (Psa. 51:6).*

At this time we are being brought back to the matter of how the divine end governs everything and how everything has to be considered and taken account of, in the light of the divine end, the end towards which God is working.

### **The divine end**

Here in the chapters from which we have read, we have unveiled the divine end. We stand here in these portions of Scripture with the Lord in the unveiling, disclosing, of the end. This whole book is called ‘the revelation or the unveiling of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him’ — the revelation of Jesus Christ. And there is a very real and strong sense in which all that is in this book is a revelation of Jesus Christ, a revelation of Him in various ways, from different standpoints: at the beginning, as fulfilling the Scripture “judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17), judging the churches and the whole church; and then dealing with wider matters. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ in action; it is the day of the Lord. And it is no less true when you come to the closing chapters, 21 and 22, that it is a revelation of Jesus Christ. There at the end we are given to see that revelation in the form of the New Jerusalem, the holy city, fairly fully described. It is still a revelation of Jesus Christ, but of course here it is a corporate and inclusive revelation of Him, not only in His Person and individual being, but also in a related way. The Lamb and the Bride are both gathered into one under the title of the New Jerusalem, the holy city, the tabernacle of God. You cannot split the two up. He is the tabernacle of God, and His own with Him constitute in a corporate way

the tabernacle of God. And now it is all the consummation of processes, mighty activities. It is the consummate realization of what God has been doing over a very long time in a deep way, very largely in a hidden way. No one has seen this quite in this way before. They have known of it; Paul probably had a fairly full knowledge of this. He was caught up to the third heaven and shown unspeakable things (2 Cor. 12:2); and then in his letter to the Galatians, he speaks of the Jerusalem which is above which is the mother of us all (4:26). He had evidently seen something about this heavenly Jerusalem, but now it is revealed as something which has been in the making, proceeding towards this glorious unveiling. It is Christ and His own.

Let us at once re-impress our own minds with a fact which is not unfamiliar — that whatever there may be of place, location, geography, about our hereafter, about the holy city, the New Jerusalem and the heavenly country, it is pre-eminently and predominantly a spiritual state far more than it is a geographical location. It would be very difficult to say exactly where the saints of this dispensation are going to be absolutely located hereafter. They may have a very much wider scope of movement than they have now. If the Lord Jesus in resurrection is a type of resurrection saints, then movement is going to be on a very different basis from what it is with us at this present time. Location becomes quite a problem for our minds, these present minds, and we are therefore compelled to realize that the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, far more than any fixed abode, is a condition of things spiritually, a heavenly nature and order towards which God is now working, and that in a spiritual way.

What is the final thing, then, about it all? If what we have just said is true, that God is working towards a condition which will be revealed, a condition which has numerous, perhaps countless, details and aspects, a very comprehensive spiritual state, what is the sum of it all when it is finally consummately unveiled? It is all gathered up in one little fragment — “having the glory of God”. The end, the goal, the object which God has always before Him and towards which God is working in every detail now is the glory of God, the glory of God which will be revealed in us in and through Christ Jesus because we are in Him and He in us. The end, the all-governing end, is the glory of God.

And the end has to govern everything with us now. It has to become a present concern, a matter for our immediate and constant regard. Everything has to be looked at in the light of this — is it to the glory of

God? How does it work out to the glory of God? How does it contribute to the glory of God? Is this matter, is this situation, is this line of things, is this order, glorifying God? If not, then for those who are the Lord's and who look forward to the day of the unveiling, such things are of altogether no account. They do not count if they are not working out to the glory of God. "Having the glory of God".

I want to suggest to you that that is a matter which should be brought immediately and fully into our lives and allowed to judge and determine the value of everything for us. Is this to the glory of God? Well, that is the inclusive, comprehensive object. That is the thing which is governing God in His dealings with us. And what is the glory of God?

### **The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**

We are to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and when we look into the face of Jesus Christ for the glory of God, what do we see? We begin at once to take account of the features of the Lord Jesus. We look into His face for those spiritual features, then look right away to the great inclusive corporate unveiling of Him in terms of the holy city, the bride, the tabernacle of God, that full-orbed revelation, Christ in corporate expression, and we see those features of the Lord Jesus there brought out in fulness and perfection. And what are they?

### **Christ the truth**

We have, in our Bible quotations, underlined one of them. I do not know whether we shall find ourselves free to go beyond this one, but if the Lord could just write this deeply and powerfully enough in our hearts to bring about a conformity to the image of His Son on this point, I am quite sure it will carry us a long way towards the divine end. Did you note, then, the emphasis of the fragments read? "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, a jasper stone" (Rev. 21:11). The first of the foundations of the wall, a jasper. The street of the city pure gold, as it were transparent glass. The river of the water of life, clear as crystal. What is all that? I suggest to you that that is the feature of the Lord Jesus of which He spoke when He said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6); or again, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts."

That is not truth of doctrine, because doctrine can be on the outside. It

is not merely truth of practice, practice can be on the outside; truth of form — that can all be on the outside. It is “truth in the inward parts”.

### **Satan the liar**

Now you recognize that this is an end-time matter particularly. Finally the issue is brought out at the end of the book of the Revelation, but it is on that very matter that the Lord takes up His judgment with the churches and the whole church comprehensively. It is this matter of truth in the inward parts, and is it not very clear and very patent that the opposite of this in an extreme way is also characteristic of the end-time? If there is one thing which will come out to full revelation, full apocalypse at the end, it will be that essential feature of Satan in the antichrist, which is the lie. “He is a liar”, said our Lord (John 8:44), “and the father thereof.” And, as we get towards the end, the world will be controlled in an extreme and mighty way by the spirit of untruth, the lie. We are seeing something of it now. It has become a philosophy to this world that you never succeed until you can tell the greatest lie and have it believed as the truth. You see that at work; I need not dwell upon that. It is a dark and terrible state of things. It is the spirit of antichrist coming to its consummate fulness for its own unveiling. And antichrist is that which runs alongside and counter to the Christ.

The movement of God towards the end is to intensify His side of this — truth, transparency, reality, an unmingled state of things with no contradictions or inconsistencies. “Pure gold, as it were transparent glass”. That is what God is doing.

### **Satan’s work in man**

Now we must just step back a bit. Beloved, you and I may believe with all our hearts that we are genuine, we are real, we are honest, we are sincere, and that the way that we are taking, seeking, pursuing, is the way of truth. We believe that about ourselves. I suppose not one of us would say otherwise than that they are before God honest, sincere, seeking to be true, after reality. Yes, we say that of ourselves and we believe that of ourselves. It is not for me to say that you are dishonest, and it is not for you to say that I am dishonest, but this we can say about ourselves and about all of us, that we do not know ourselves. You see, a horrible mix-up took place at the beginning when Adam sinned. The liar gained access; he

not only told a lie and not only persuaded the others to accept his lie and to act upon it. No, something more than a merely external thing happened. What he was after was to get a begetting by his word. You see, God begets by His word. We are begotten by the Word of God, and Satan seeks to get a begetting, a kind of being, a type of person, by his word. Whenever you and I accept a word from Satan, a suggestion from Satan, we have not only accepted something that is not true that we can easily turn from, something has gained access into our beings which changes us and makes us another kind of being. That is what happened at the beginning. Adam was changed from the being that he was and became another kind of being. The word which stands over man's heart forever since then is that his heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, "exceedingly corrupt" (ASV), "desperately wicked" (KJV) (Jer. 17:9). Something has happened in us that we in our very beings, our very souls, are mixed, confused, deceived and deceitful. We do not know ourselves even when we think that we are most genuine, most sincere, but God knows us, and the only way of dealing with this matter is to get the fires of purging to work, and when you and I come into those divine fires of purging and refining, we begin to discover things about ourselves that we would never have believed. We begin to see the deceitfulness of our own hearts and we begin to lose all confidence in ourselves, in our judgments, in our abilities, in our understanding. That is the negative side.

### **God's undoing of the work of Satan**

On the other side, we come more and evermore to the realization that unless God does the work in us and makes things clear to us and leads us Himself and becomes our wisdom, our understanding, our strength, our ability. We are indeed hopeless. One of the marks of real growth in grace is the loss of self-assurance, the gaining of a deep meekness and humility, a sense of dependence upon the Lord. You may say, 'Surely, if we are growing in grace and walking with the Lord, we ought to be very assured.' Well, in some sense it may be that we are gaining assurance along certain lines, but not self-assurance. There is an awful undoing of a mixed-up state under the hand of God. How is God going to get the people that He wants at the end who form that bride, that city, that tabernacle of God? How is He going to do it?

He is going to do it along the line of creating and intensifying a quest for reality, and that means losing a great deal of satisfaction and

contentment with things that are merely formal, external, and which are mixed and inconsistent and contradictory. It is a work to be done in us, an intense work of the Spirit of God. He sets up in us a quest for utter and downright reality; a transparent state; purity. It begins with ourselves, not with other people and not with other things. The question which will arise continually under this operation of God's Spirit will be as to whether, after all, we in our own experience, in our own spiritual position, are true to what we know in a doctrinal way as to the revealed will of God. Yes, it will be like that. It is a real work of the Spirit of God when that is brought about.

A young man once came to me after a meeting and he tried to persuade me very strongly along a certain line of doctrine and teaching about sinless perfection and the root of sin being taken out, and that sort of thing, and he was very strong about it and I could not say anything, he was so strong. Then we went on to the next meeting and the Lord spoke strongly in that meeting about the Word of the Cross, and that young man came to me again and he was changed, and he said, 'Mr. Sparks, supposing you do trip up, supposing you do make mistakes, what do you do?' I looked at him and said, 'Are you admitting after all that you do trip up, you do make a mistake?' Well, with a solemn talk together, it came out that he was the victim of a very evil habit and he had been trying to browbeat me into this doctrine, and the Spirit of God nailed him down on this question of truth in the inward parts. (That is not said to criticize any teaching.)

The point is that God is not going to let us off if we really mean business with Him. Towards the end He is going to intensify this matter. You hold certain truths but does your life represent those truths? You believe certain things, how do you stand up to your beliefs? The Lord Jesus is the plummet and up against Him we have got to stand and all our bulges and our 'unstraightness' are going to be manifested because we have got to be conformed to His image and this is not done externally and mechanically. It is going to be experimental and inward with our knowledge. We have to come to the point where we hand over to the Lord, where we see this thing boldly and clearly and say, 'Yes, there is a kink, there is a twist, there is something inconsistent and not straight. Lord, you have got to deal with that — straighten it out or get rid of it!' The Lord is dealing with that sort of thing in His people.

It is true of many of His children today the world over. It may be the thing that the Lord is doing with His people today while they are wanting

Him to do some big public thing, to come out in some great new movement, revival or something like that. Perhaps He is doing something just as big as that, but hidden, secret, not public, not a movement, not a piece of organized work, something deep, and it may be that this is what He is doing the world over today through various kinds of fires. Sometimes it may be the fires of world conditions, the sufferings into which His children are plunged by the conditions in this world, the new situations into which they are thrust; sometimes by the sufferings of inaction, a wilderness, desert situation. Oh, many may be the forms of these fiery trials, but whatever the form, the one thing that the Lord is doing with His people is to bring about a strong and intense desire for reality. Shall I put it another way — to get them out of false positions. You know, organized Christianity does put us into so many false positions. The system of things as it is puts us into false positions. There are many young men and women, who, while it was painful to have the eagle's nest stirred up and to be flung out on the wing, are saying today, 'It was very difficult. It was not a pleasant experience to have to get out into these new conditions, but I thank God for it. It is saving me unto something more real; it is enabling me to prove God for myself; it is necessitating a knowledge of the Lord which I did not possess!' Yes, they are saying that, many young men and women in the Forces and in those branches of national service which are very difficult. It is all working towards this reality, to save them from a false position spiritually, inwardly and outwardly. God is doing that, and if He is (and perhaps you know something of that) well, the end is coming near. If this is intensifying on a large scale, then the end is near. God is after a company of people who really do follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, who really are saved deep down in their being from every form of unreality and untruth, of mixture and contradiction and denial, because this spoils the divine work.

You know when John Ruskin went to Italy and later wrote his 'Seven Lamps of Architecture', writing on the lack of truth, he said of his visit to Florence and other parts that he went to see various places which had in them those things which ravished the eye of the artist and the architect, but he found in one place a priceless fresco, ruined because the builder had put lying stones in the roof. In another place he found a wonderful dome collapsed because the builder had put lying stones in the foundation. In another place he said he was filled with disgust as he saw that rain had come in through cracks and washed the marble off the pillars. He said —

A lie! They had stood there holding a name for centuries as wonderful marble pillars and their lie had at last been found out, and he turned away with loathing. A lie in the roof, in the foundation, in the pillar, disclosed after many years, was at last revealed, and reputations collapsed, names which had been held in high regard were disgraced and things of priceless value were ruined by a lie. That is the work of the evil one, and the Lord is out against all that.

Now, beloved, what is the point of all this? It is no charge — if it is a charge it is as much made against myself as you. The point is to know what God is after. Oh, let us stop thinking in merely objective terms of what God is after, something outward, some framework. No, what God is after mainly, pre-eminently, is a people of an inward state who will judge everything in the light of His glory.

This is very practical, to look at everything in the light of this. Our domestic situations — does this situation work out to the glory of God? If not, what am I doing about it? Are we taking responsibility? Are we saying that we want the glory of God, and this thing is not finding us really getting down to it and together getting it cleared up because it takes from the glory of God? What about those disruptive relationships between us and other Christians? That is not to the glory of God. Where two children of God are all the time at variance and there is strain, that situation is not to the glory of God. It is a lie for us to say that we want to live here for the glory of God if we are not doing anything about that. We are destroying something very precious to God. There is a lie in the foundation.

So every practical matter of our lives has got to be brought up to this point of judgment. What about the glory of God in this? How much glory to God is being veiled, being taken away or being brought to the Lord? Suffer the strength of the word that I feel in my heart. I can but say I believe the Lord is dealing with me very greatly on this very matter to make sure that with all the teaching and with all the knowledge in the head and with all that we say and stand for, we inwardly correspond. Our prayer will have to be very much that the Lord will see to it that He has, so far as we are concerned, truth in the inward parts, that we are not first interested in things at all, in movements, even in churches. No, we do not begin on the outside until God gets a people right down on the bedrock of reality, truth, and transparency. Well, what is the good of anything else? It will go to pieces. May the Lord burn it into our hearts and give us that feature of His Son — a zeal for the Father's glory.

## LOVE UNFEIGNED

*Reading: Rev. 2:1-7; 21:21.*

In our previous meditation, we were considering the main object towards which the Lord is working and will work in His true people to bring out into revelation and manifestation a people in His Son, having His glory. Everything in His thought and action has that one object in view — the glory of God, and we said that for us that end has got to govern all the details of our lives every day. We went on to see that the city is the sum total of the features of the Lord Jesus brought to perfection in His own so that what we see in the Lord Jesus personally is brought out at length in that corporate organism, and the first thing was transparency, truth, absolute honesty and reality.

### **The balancing of truth and love**

You notice that to Ephesus the Lord said, “I know ... that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false.” That is only saying in other words, I know that you hate unreality, insincerity; you are tremendously jealous for the truth; you have investigated, gone into this matter of these people’s profession and claim and you have sought it out and proved it to be false in your jealousy for truth, for reality and sincerity — the very thing that the Lord must have. Then He comes back to those very people and says, ‘Yes, but even so, though I find that, that in itself does not justify me in preserving your lampstand in its place, your vessel of testimony. There is something that must go with it and these two things are exceedingly difficult to keep together — love and truth; absolute jealousy for reality, honesty, sincerity and truth and love, divine love. There is your task, there is your job, to get those things together.’

You see, this kind of jealousy for truth in itself can make us suspicious, separate, critical, legal and hard, if it is alone. God must have it. It is of tremendous importance to have this downright honesty and reality from the very core of our being. He must have it, but it has to be balanced, it has to be covered, it has to have something going hand in hand with it, or the testimony and the glory are not there. Our jealousy, zeal and passion for truth and reality may be without glory. We have all sinned, we have all fallen into that, the glory has not been there, the radiance of the Lord's glory has not been there even while we have been so concerned about reality and truth.

### **One street of pure gold**

So, when we pass from the beginning of the Revelation to the end, to the city, we come to all these things which suggest and present the idea of purity, truth, transparency, but we come to the other thing as well: "The street of the city was pure gold like transparent glass." Pure gold, yes, transparent. Oh, I can see so clearly what this means. What is this gold? What is this street? Our hymns talk about the streets of the New Jerusalem, "Its streets, I am told, are paved with pure gold" — but the Bible does not say so. We all have to live in one street when we get to glory! There will be no nice little places somewhere out the back there where you can detach yourself and get alone. There will be one thoroughfare, and we are all going to be on it spiritually — I am not talking about geography now. Beloved, then there will be no 'hiving-off', no cutting ourselves apart, no getting out there in some place of our own. It is going to be the fellowship of unfeigned love, that is, transparent love, the unfeigned love of the brethren (1 Pet. 1:22); unfeigned, as pure and clear as glass. We are simply going to have to live together — oh, will there be any compulsion necessary? — we shall then be together. That gold is His love and we will all be together in that love unfeigned.

It seems to me that there is no other way possible of realizing the Lord's great end — His glory — there is no other way possible than the way of unfeigned love. While we are here in these human frames, in this human life as it is, we shall always be so diverse, different and perhaps conflicting. There will always be that with which we shall have to bear and forbear; we shall never, while we are here, come to perfect understanding. We may come to a large measure of understanding and a large measure of inward oneness, but we shall never be free from at least

the possibility of conflict, dividedness and strained relationships because of our different way of viewing things, our different mentalities. You have one mentality; I have another. We all have different mentalities, even over the things of the Lord. I do not think we could ever find an absolute unanimity along the line of discussion and threshing things out and getting together to talk on all these points. No, let us face it quite frankly — we cannot do it, it will not be done. But are we then to abandon all hope because that is not possible here? No, beloved, I believe that there is another line of infinite possibility which makes this impossibility less a matter of despair, and that is the line of His love shed abroad in our hearts, not feigned love. Feigned love is something which we work up, conjure up and make believe. We say we love one another, we mean it perhaps and we are trying to keep that up, but that is feigned love. His love is something of infinite possibility which Satan has no power over. A fellowship in the love of God, the love of the Spirit, is something against which Satan will break himself and something which brings great glory to the Lord.

And that love of God does not depend or rest upon any human conditions at all. You know, beloved, it is possible for people to be together who naturally, on the human ground, heartily dislike one another and yet at the same time they love one another. You say, ‘That is a contradiction!’ Well, it may be a contradiction, but it is a glorious contradiction. It is possible for us to get above that. Suppose we come together to pray; we are lifted while we are in prayer so that, while we are the same people who, if we drop down on to the ordinary level of our humanity, are all at sixes and sevens, in confusion or disagreement, yet here we are in the Lord’s presence in prayer and the love of God flows like an unbroken stream; there is no break, no rift. We have known that; you have known that. You know quite well that when you come to an impasse, a deadlock, and feel that the situation between you and someone else is an impossible one and that is all there is to it, if you will kneel down and pray together, a new hope and prospect at once comes in and you move into another realm where things are not so impossible, after all. That actually happens if only you pray together; you are in touch with the Lord.

Now, that is the end towards which the Lord is working; that is this heavenly city, New Jerusalem, but that is something that is not built at the end suddenly. Oh no, this city is not travailed for in a day, is not born in an hour. This city is being built now, and you and I are challenged now in this moment and every day with the tremendous issues of the city of God,

for that great end, the glory of God. And it is not to the glory of God if the Lord's people are out of touch, out of fellowship; and fellowship is a very practical thing in the New Testament.

It is all very well to talk about this love and this fellowship and being one and all the rest of it and yet to keep ourselves out of the way up in some corner, detached, in no practical relationship. That is nonsense; that is not the truth! The Lord is practical about truth and practical about love and love which cannot bring us together is not love at all.

Well, I do not need to say a lot more about this. I feel that the Lord wants to point it out. You see what is in view. The end is that we are all found together, on one street, in pure love. That is the end and towards that the Lord is working. It is not just going to happen. It is something that has got to be wrought into us now and into which we have got to be wrought by the Spirit of God. I know and you know how immensely practical this is, and how difficult it is. That is why it is so practical. If things were just easy and came about, well, they would not have very much practical value, but here is a proposition which, on the natural side, is very difficult, and perhaps your reaction is, 'Yes, but the Lord must bring it all about, we cannot do it, we must wait until the Lord does it!'

### **The Lord's need of our cooperation**

Is that right? If we took that position, we should be taking the position that our relatedness to the Lord destroys our own souls, and the Lord is challenging these churches here upon the basis of their responsibility. He says, 'You have to do something in this matter, you have responsibility and you have to take that responsibility and you have to bring your will into line with My will in this. You are not to be as will-less people without souls, you are moral people with this responsibility. And while I know that you cannot achieve it by your own soul strength, by anything in your own soul, you have to bring that soul of yours, that mind, that heart, that will, into line with My purpose and cooperate with Me, and I say to you that this is something that lies at your door.' When we read these messages to the churches, we cannot get away from the fact that the Lord put something at their door. 'This is your responsibility! Here is My thought, My will and you know it; you have something to do about this!'

What are we doing about this matter of relatedness, fellowship, love? Are we unbalanced people to begin with, all for truth? We are getting down to the fine points, the minutiae, the intensely fine points of doctrine

and truth and right and wrong. This other side keeps the balance even — not just the abstract, detached love, but the practical love which takes responsibility, but which is wanting. What about it?

This thing can be approached along many lines and dealt with from many sides. I have only crowded into a small space and a certain form of presentation of the whole New Testament, I might say the whole Bible. If you will read again your New Testament, read the Acts and the Epistles again, you will see that this is the thing which governs them and runs through them all. These are the two major things of the New Testament and because these were lacking in some places, you have the terrible situation that ensued and the testimony was not confirmed. The Lord wants the testimony confirmed, and what is the confirmation of the testimony? First, what is the testimony? It is the glory of God in Jesus Christ, in a vessel, the church, and in the churches as making up that vessel.

### **Love opens the way for fuller revelation**

Now on the one side, right through those letters, there is this whole question of downright concern for truth, and, running parallel with it, downright concern for love. Some of them had the one without the other, the truth without the love. But you notice if you find a case where the love was pre-eminent, there was always a large way for the Lord to give fuller revelation.

You see the history of Ephesus. You remember how Ephesus came into being; that great heart response to the Lord, though at tremendous cost. The figure is mentioned; at tremendous cost, they brought all their books on magic, a great library, and it went up in smoke. A great heart response to the Lord. What is the result? Why, look what God gives to Ephesus in the way of light, truth, revelation — tremendous! No wonder that He says, “Consider from whence thou art fallen” (Rev. 2:5). Yes, love blazed up and love opens the way for light. It is better, if we are going to be unbalanced people, to err on the side of love than on the side of legality, but the Lord wants them to go together.

I am pointing out that the New Testament runs along these parallel lines, and always so practically. It is this balancing of these two matters, which is in view in the very existence of the church and the churches. Do not think that the Lord gave to His servants, the apostles, the idea of just going about forming churches here and there, that it is the New Testament scheme of things to go about forming churches. That is not the beginning

of things at all, that is not the truth. What the Lord was after was having in every place vessels for His glory, companies of people who were constituted by these two things for the glory of God. Let those things go or let them become unbalanced in those matters, and what does the Lord say? “I will remove thy lampstand” (Rev. 2:5). What is that? The vessel of testimony. The church will go; that local company will go. I have no interest in a thing as a thing, not just a company of people together in a place which can be called a church. I am not a bit interested in that, but I am interested in this, that the Lord should have here on this earth people, if possible together, who really do embody these features of His Son in as full a measure as possible, free from all contradiction and inconsistency and falsehood of every kind, and filled with the love of God. Get companies like that, and you have something tremendous for the glory of God and for the undoing of all that Satan has done, because what Satan has done has always been to contradict those two things: truth with a lie, and love with division. Is that not true? The work of Satan is to put a lie in the place of truth (and for him mixture is the lie), and to put division in the place of love. I am sure you agree with that.

But are we victims, unwillingly perhaps, unconsciously, of the enemy’s purpose of putting the Lord’s people apart? Oh, are we apart? If so, the Lord is robbed of something of His glory and Satan is gaining something. The bringing of these two things together means deliverance from false positions of all kinds.

### **The practical outworking of love**

Now come back to these Epistles. What do you have in these Epistles? In 1 Corinthians, for example, you work up to a sublime height in chapter 15. You have a heavenly unveiling of what it is going to be like in the resurrection, what a resurrection body is going to be like. “There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial” (v. 40). “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (v. 49). When death is swallowed up in victory, the great cry goes out, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? ... thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ... Now concerning the collection for the saints” (1 Cor. 15:55-16:1). Oh, you say, the chapters are divided! Yes, but the division is artificial. God never made those chapters; men made them years afterwards. You say that that is an anticlimax; that is coming down from heaven to earth with a bump.

Not at all. That sort of thing is repeated again and again in the New Testament with Holy Spirit deliberateness. The Lord does not want you to get soaring away in the clouds and living up there in a false position of spirituality, when there are poor saints here needing your practical love. “Now concerning the collection for the saints ... Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store ...”. It is no anticlimax at all; it is all of a piece. The Lord is very practical in His heavenly things.

Corinthians? Well, if there are seven heavens and Corinthians is the third, you go up in Ephesians still higher, back to eternity past, “Chosen in Him before the world was”; “seated together with Him in the heavenlies”; the wonderful unveiling of the church which is His Body; the exalted Lord leading captivity captive and giving gifts to men. Those first three chapters of Ephesians are wonderful.

Now cut out the numbers of chapters and run right on. “Husbands, love your wives.” “Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands.” “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” “Servants ... masters ...”. You may say, Two different realms, two different things, anticlimax again, a drop out of the heavenlies to the earthlies! Not at all — it is the lifting of the earthlies up into the heavenlies. How practical! Some people have no interest in that sort of thing. All their interests are up in those wonderful revelations, and their own wonderful revelations.

What is the point? You have got to keep things together. You can get out on truth and leave love, but God says these two things are twins. They cannot be separated, they are all of a piece, they are one, to be kept balanced in even proportions and very practical only in that way. Thus love comes in to save you from a false position. What is the false position? Why, the false position would be that you were always occupied with a resurrection body and neglecting the needs of the poor saints. That is a false position. To be always occupied with your eternal location and predestination in Christ, and the heavenly glories of the church His Body, and your wife, husband, children, parents, masters and servants not having the practical love and care that they ought to have from you as a child of God is an absolutely false position; it is a contradiction, a denial. That is not truth in the inward parts; it is a lie.

## **Loving with the love of God**

Let us open our hearts to this challenge of the Lord and let us respond as responsible people in this matter of love and of truth. In this chapter the

word is love; come into line with that. You say you cannot; you cannot love, but the love of God can love. It is not our love that has to be lifted up to God; it is God's love that is to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). And, after all, what am I, and what are you?

Are you such a loveable creature? If God looked down upon you from heaven and knew you absolutely through and through, were you such a loveable creature that He came and gave Himself and everything He had for you because you are so loveable? Was I that? No! But He has done it. We know that we are unloveable. There is a great deal about us that is hateful, a great deal more than we know. Yet God loves us.

The great example of divine love is towards Israel, Jewry. God never chose the most beautiful, loveable people or nation on this earth to be the example of His love. No, He did not; sometimes we may think He chose just the opposite. The history of the Jews is not a beautiful history at all of a loveable people, always right and going on with hearts always towards the Lord. No, look at their history. It is written large and clear; a people needing simply infinite patience, infinite forbearance, having so many characteristics that everybody hates and dislikes, and yet it says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). "I have graven thee on the palms of My hands" (Isa. 49:16). Yes, that is the love of God.

It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, not our striving to love, but His love. Now that must send us to our knees in a tremendous and continuous cry: 'O Lord, baptize me into Your love, shed abroad Your love!' It is the only way. We are not going to solve our problems of relationship or fellowship by discussion and argument and anything to and fro like that. It is going to be only by the love of God, but it can be by the love of God. Are we going to give the love of God a chance, or are we going to stand back and wait for it to come over to us? Are we going to take this matter up that on the ground of the love of God we are going to be aggressors in this matter? O Lord, make us aggressive in love!

## THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD

*Reading: Gal. 4:26,31; 5:1; Psa. 132:13-14; Psa. 2:6; 40:8; Heb. 12:22-23.*

*“The Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother” (Gal. 4:26).*

In Galatians chapter four and in the other passages which we have read, we are brought into touch with Abraham’s two families. These two families are also called two mountains, and again two cities; and then further they are likened, on the one hand, to a servant, and on the other hand, to a son. All these similes are used of the same things. The one family of Abraham through Hagar is one mountain, Sinai; one city, the earthly Jerusalem; one bondservant. The other family through Sarah is another mountain, Mount Zion; another city, Jerusalem which is above, the heavenly Jerusalem, and now not a bondservant but this time a son, Isaac. You notice how the Scriptures and the apostle Paul particularly in these connections give the idea associated with the different sets.

One mountain is law, that is Sinai; the other mountain is grace, that is Zion. One city Jerusalem which is below, this earth, in bondage; the other city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is free. The apostle says, Our mother was a free woman and is a free woman, we are children of the free woman, that is our mother.

We have been occupied so far in these messages with these divine thoughts and intentions for the Lord’s people which are set forth in the city, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the final fulness of those divine thoughts, the Lord’s mind for His people. Before we go on in this matter, I am going to say one thing.

If we are here on a right basis as we ought to be, we are here on a very unnatural basis, a most unnatural basis, our position is a most unnatural one. I do not just mean by that that we are on a spiritual and not a natural basis. I mean something more than that. It is a very unnatural thing

for anyone to seek to know the thoughts and desires and intentions of another when that other with His thoughts and desires and intentions call upon them to abandon their own will and accept His. It is most unnatural for anybody to desire to know the will of God when they know quite well that, in knowing it, they will have to let their own will go altogether and accept another will, a will altogether other than and contrary to their own will. That is unnatural, but that is the essence of spiritual instruction, that is the very nature of instruction in the Word of God, and that represents the great difference between just Bible teaching, and instruction in the Word of God. I do want to make that difference very clear.

When Stephen spoke to the gathered Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and gave a long and wonderful discourse, they listened with close attention in perfect silence until he reached a certain point. It says up to that point they gave attention. Why? Well, he was going over the Bible, he was tracing the history of Israel, he was speaking of the Old Testament. If you like, he was teaching the Scriptures. Up to that point it was all out of immediate practical application to their own lives and therefore they listened and probably would have gone on listening for hours if he had kept there. But as soon as he turned to bring this right home and to show how this whole thing was a challenge to them in the realm of their will and their attitude, they were no longer interested and they would no longer give heed. And that is the difference between a certain teaching of the Bible and instruction in the Word of God.

It is a most unnatural thing to subject ourselves or submit ourselves to instruction in the Word of God because it runs altogether counter to our own wills and natures. It makes a challenge, a demand. Over in America a very common phrase amongst Christian people is that they are going to hear Bible teaching and you see these people flocking to their literally thousands of Bible schools and institutions with their notebooks. They rush there and they rush away, but you never find, only in very rare cases, that the whole of this system of Bible teaching has any immediate relationship to their personal lives. It might be any other kind of teaching. But the evil of it is that they think they know the Bible, they can quote the Bible and if you are quoting Scripture they can finish it for you and the whole edge of things is turned by that familiarity with the content of God's Word. The edge is turned; they know it; you cannot tell them. They can complete every sentence that you start of Scripture and it simply goes off like water off a duck's back.

Oh, we have to be careful, and our thought and desire is not to get

Bible teaching in that sense, but that instruction which is a challenge, which goes right home and runs counter to our will. What a lot of difference it would make if we and all the children of God took that attitude — I am here, and if the Lord says anything, if anything comes out of this time which really does run directly opposite to my desires, to my ideas, to my will, I submit myself to the Lord over that matter to have my side of things put altogether away, to accept what is of the Lord whatever it means of an upheaval in my life! What a difference it would make, what an advantage the Lord would gain! I believe that that may be true of most of us, I trust of all, but I do feel it is an important word because what I am going to say can be very interesting Bible matter or Bible teaching. These allegories, these analogies, how interesting they are: Hagar and Sarah and Sinai and Zion, and the Jerusalem here and the Jerusalem above. The differences, comparisons, interpretations and implications of these different things are very interesting. But if it stops there, we have wasted our time and perhaps we are done more harm than good. The thing has got to come to us with some upsetting force if it is going to achieve God's end.

Now, we come to this side of Abraham's life which is realized in a heavenly family, a spiritual family, a heavenly seed, a heavenly mountain, a son, to see what things really do mean as spiritual features of God's will for us. The Jerusalem which is above, the Zion which is not an earthly Zion, that mountain, the family, the son, these are the embodiment of spiritual things of tremendous importance if God is going to realize the manifestation of His glory in the saints.

It is perfectly clear, as you look at the two families and the two mountains and the two cities and remember that they are identical objects with different titles or names, that you have two distinct sets of ideas. One is said to be done away with, put away, abolished; there is no longer place for it. The other is that which is said to be abiding, established, eternal, the thing upon which God is concentrating now.

### **The city the embodiment of faith**

It is quite clear that the one family of Abraham through Hagar was not a family of faith, and it is even more clear that the family through Sarah was a family of faith. That comes out in the mountains. The Bible takes a great deal of room to make it quite clear that Sinai, that mountain, is not faith, but works. On the other hand, Zion is faith. This heavenly Jerusalem, this unseen city, this that is much more real and, yes, much

more practical in the life of the child of God, nevertheless is essentially a thing of faith. It is faith from beginning to end. It is our mother; therefore we have been born from above. "Our citizenship is in heaven", says the apostle (Phil. 3:20). Our franchise is in that heavenly city; that is where we are enrolled. "Who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. 12:23).

How did we become born citizens of a heavenly, unseen city? No one has ever been born again yet without faith. Faith is the first thing in the spiritual life. Our very new birth from above is a matter of faith. We call it 'believing on the Lord Jesus to be saved'. That is the first step; that is where our birth from above takes place. It is essentially a matter of faith, this heavenly citizenship, and from the first all the way along it is like that and becomes more and more intensely so with the consummation of our citizenship. The manifestation of the glory of the sons of God is the perfecting of faith. This city is the embodiment of faith and its final, full unveiling is nothing other than the coming out of the triumphant faith which God has wrought into the saints.

### **The need of cooperation with God by faith**

That gets rid of everything mechanical. There is a system of teaching which makes things so mechanical that you are saved and nothing else matters. You are saved and automatically you will be glorified; the thing will take place mechanically; you will be at the end in the fullness. This teaching omits completely all the work necessary and indispensable to reach God's full end, this work of the perfecting of faith. It is not a mechanical attainment, a mechanical and automatic realization. God is doing something. It never dispenses with His grace or makes less of His grace that He is working something in us and calls upon us to submit ourselves to His working. That still throws us more than ever on His grace. But there is a place where we have to be conformed to the image of His Son by sanction and by cooperation, by submission, and all this is along the line of the testing of faith.

Abraham, we know, is the great example of faith. Every step of Abraham's life was a step on the challenge of faith, calling upon him to yield himself to that challenge. The God of glory appeared unto Abraham and commanded him to get out from his country, his kindred, his father's house, into a land that would be shown him. Well, the first step was cooperation with God in faith, a step of faith. And the next stage did not just follow. A fresh crisis arises, a new stage of testing of faith, and again

Abraham has to do something about it. And yet again God challenges him and he has to do something in this matter, to act with God in faith. All the divine thoughts and intentions would never have secured the end. Abraham would not have been there if he had sat down and said, 'Well, I believe God is right and I commit myself to God and I accept all His will and embrace His glorious purpose. Now Lord, I sit down here and you work it all out!' Nothing would have happened. He had to come into active cooperation with God on the basis of faith. And that is his family; he begets a family after that kind. That is the city for which he looked; that is the heavenly Jerusalem; that is Zion. We are come, not to a place, not to a thing, but to a spiritual position.

Now, all that is very simple, so far as words are concerned, but it is so nice to think about this wonderful city that we are going to. "I have read of a beautiful city" far away in some region untold — and we can become very sentimental and even dramatic about this wonderful city. "We're marching upward to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion." Beloved, you and I are only progressing towards Zion as we pass the daily tests of faith. We never come to that city, because it is not some location somewhere in or beyond the clouds to which we are going to be suddenly translated. At this moment if you are having a test of faith, faith in God, in God's ways, in God's love, wisdom, kindness, if you are having any kind of test of faith, that is the pathway to Zion for you, it is the pathway to Jerusalem. That is the pathway of the heavenly family. You cannot divorce these things. You cannot be on the way to God's end, to the city, and not be governed by what that city is in its spiritual meaning, and it is first of all faith perfected. To have a large place in that city means to have a large faith perfected. I believe the measure of the glory in that city will be the measure of the testing and the triumph of faith here and now, from day to day.

We could spend much time on this matter of faith, but it is just the opposite of Hagar and Ishmael; it is just the opposite of Sinai; it is just the opposite of the Jerusalem that is beneath, on this earth; and just the opposite of the bond-slave.

### **Satan's attempt to undermine faith**

That challenges us in many ways. You know, if there is one thing that Satan fears and hates, it is the coming into manifestation of that city. That is the end of his régime, his kingdom, the end for him when once that is unveiled in glory. Therefore, if that city is the perfected faith of the Son of

God in His own, Satan is going to stand at nothing to unsettle, disturb and shake our faith, to destroy our confidence, our assurance, to bring us under condemnation and doubt. Satan will stand at nothing to interfere with our faith because that faith is going to be his undoing. Oh, Satan is not going to be deposed as an item in a programme. Satan is going to be deposed by the spiritual power of God's Son wrought in the saints, and the first thing in that spiritual power is the faith of the Son of God.

You see how Satan sought to get the Son of God to let in some slight suggestion of doubt, and one of his subtleties is to try and get us in that sonship to prove our position. That is subtle — to do something to prove it. "If thou be the Son" — prove it by doing things. The subtlety was and always is just this, that immediately you begin to take that on and to do something to prove it, you have let in the doubt. The only answer to Satan is, 'Look here, this thing does not need proving. It is a fact; it stands; it is established. I am not going to be doing this and that and something else to prove that I am a child of God; I am a child of God. I am not going to argue about it or do anything about it.' 'If' — then do something to prove it. How subtle! Take up that challenge: 'Alright, I will do this as a child of God to prove that I am a child of God; I will experiment with my sonship to establish it!' Satan has you on his ground at once, and you have let in the question. Yes, anything to bring in a doubt, unbelief, to undo. It would have undone the Lord Jesus Himself if He had not closed that door, and said, 'That door is not open — not open to question, not open to debate, to discussion, that is settled. God has said, This is My Son, My beloved. God has said it, the door is closed. I will do nothing to prove it!'

Yes, Satan is out to interfere with that faith which means his overthrow, and it is a bitter fight to maintain that ground, but you can see that there lies behind God's dealings with His people a tremendous issue.

### **The universal issue bound up with the faith of God's children**

I often think there is a great deal of correspondence between Job and Ephesians. Have you thought of that? Job seems to set the very drama of this universe spiritually. Here is a man about whom God says that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect man. He says that to Satan, and then Satan raises questions and God says, 'Alright, we will work this out in the light of this man; we will make him the very stage where this whole issue is worked out. You go and do your worst, short of touching his life; do all that you can!' And as Satan gets to work, we see the poor frailty of

Job; we see Job in the fires crying out. Yes, that is his humanity, but in the end Job has not blasphemed God. Job has not fundamentally departed from faith in God and in the end he stands in the innermost being true with God. Although it does not say so, God is able at the end to come back to Satan and say, Well, what about it? You have done all that you can do and Job still fears Me; Job is still here. We have fought this thing out on the battleground of this man's human life.

Ephesians chapter 3 says, "Now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God" (verse 10). The church is the stage upon which God is working out this drama before principalities and powers and we are involved in that. A big issue, a universal issue, is being fought out in our faith, and we are put into the fires of faith's terrible testing, and there is some spiritual issue at stake, and that issue is no less than God being justified and Satan being destroyed, on the battlefield of our faith. It is so difficult to grasp that and believe that. When we are in the fires it seems so far away, but that is what the Word says. There are big issues bound up with the testing of our faith, and then at last when that faith, the corporate faith of God's elect, is brought out into manifestation, Satan's kingdom is no more, and it has been abolished through the victorious faith of God's Son in the elect.

### **A life in the Spirit**

Now you realize how practical that is and how near it comes to everyday life. That is what God is doing. Abraham's family on that side; Abraham's mountain on that side; Abraham's son on that side; all represent the embodiment of faith.

Then that is not all. Along with that is this other thing, that this life of faith is a life in the Spirit and not in the flesh. The family through Hagar was in the flesh; through Isaac, in the Spirit. The mountain, Sinai, is the works of the flesh; the mountain Zion is the Spirit. The city Jerusalem below is the flesh; Jerusalem above is the Spirit. The bondservant is the flesh; the son is the Spirit. You know that is quite true. Romans chapter 8 makes that perfectly clear. It is the chapter on sonship and on life in the Spirit. It is a life in the Spirit, not in the flesh. What the Lord is at work upon is to get a people who really do walk after the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and not after the flesh, who are really spiritually-minded and not carnally-minded. The heavenly Jerusalem at last will be the manifestation

of a perfected walk in the Spirit and we are called on to that road, the road to that city, and that city is in hidden formation now. And whenever you and I repudiate the life of the flesh, the carnal mind, judging after the flesh and not after the Spirit; when we have our relationships not after the flesh but after the Spirit; when we refuse to allow our attitude and our relationships with other people to be governed by what is carnal and what is natural, and rather we are governed by what is spiritual, we are making progress towards the heavenly Jerusalem; that is the way there. Are you quite clear about that? I do not think I need enlarge upon that matter at present. It is a walking after the Spirit, learning to walk after the Spirit.

It is learning everything all over again in a new way; it is learning to walk again as we have never walked before, we have never gone this way before. We are simply like babies learning to walk. We fall over now and again, but a baby does not give up walking because it has a tumble or two. It does not abandon the whole thing and say, 'This is an impossible thing, beyond human range altogether, somebody's fantastic idea, this walking business. I give it up, I am never going to try again; it does not work. No, the normal child gets up and walks again and keeps on walking, learning this thing that is so new.

When we are born again, it is just like that, and it is so to the end. We never here in this life get to the place where we are walking perfectly, where we are never capable of having a slip-up, losing our bearings, or coming down with a crash because, perhaps, of some pride, some self-assurance. Walking is something that has got to be a matter of education right to the end. It is a new kind of walk after the Spirit and it is an education. We do not know very much about it. It is a new world, this walking after the Spirit.

But walking is a very real thing and there is much bound up with walking in order to explore the fulness of that realm of God. It is a great thing to walk up and down in the land. That is, to realize that you have come into a large place with the Lord, a wealthy place, a full place, a place of boundless meaning, and although you cannot define it or explain it, you feel that you are walking up and down in a realm of great meaning and great value. We are walking up and down in a wealthy land. I cannot put it into words, but I can walk up and down in this land and see great things. It is great to come to the place where you are really moving in the enlargement of the Lord, walking up and down in the land. But it is an education; it is learning a new kind of walk in the Spirit.

*To be continued.*